

Beatrice Black Bear

The World's Neatest

Photographer

By John Grandits

Illustrated by Paige Billin-Frye



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opening windows for young minds

**No more
trash**



Tire Trouble

by Emily Cambias

When a tire wears out and can't be used for driving anymore, what happens to it? Too many get sent to the dump. They don't rot away there. They pile up and up and up.

How can people keep tires out of the dump?

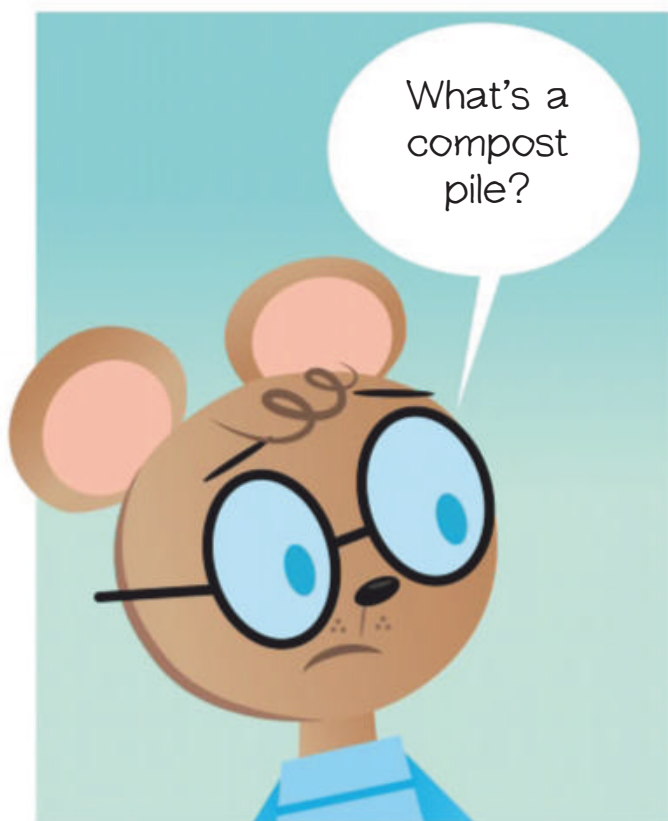
Turn to page 34 for some ideas.







A compost pile takes nature stuff you'd throw away—like leaves, grass clippings, and fruit and vegetable peels—and turns them into healthy food for plants.



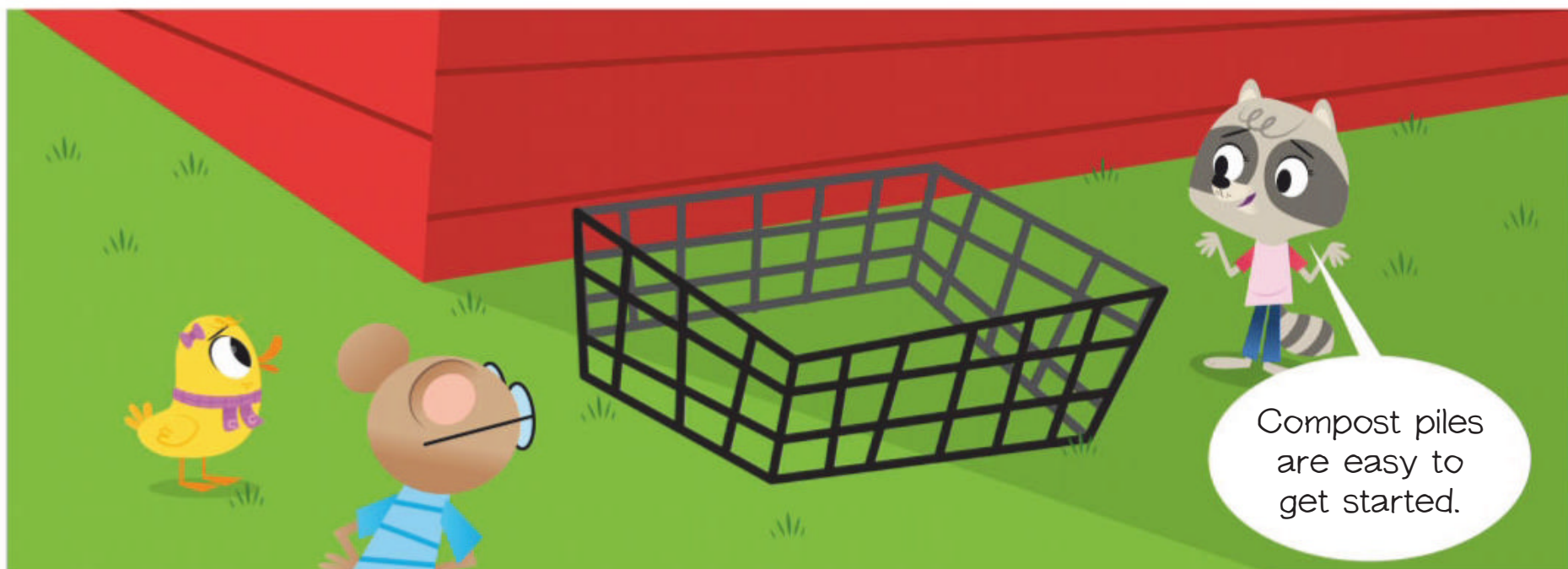
So that's your secret to growing such nice flowers.



Can we make a compost pile too?



Sure, I'm starting another one down by the clubhouse.

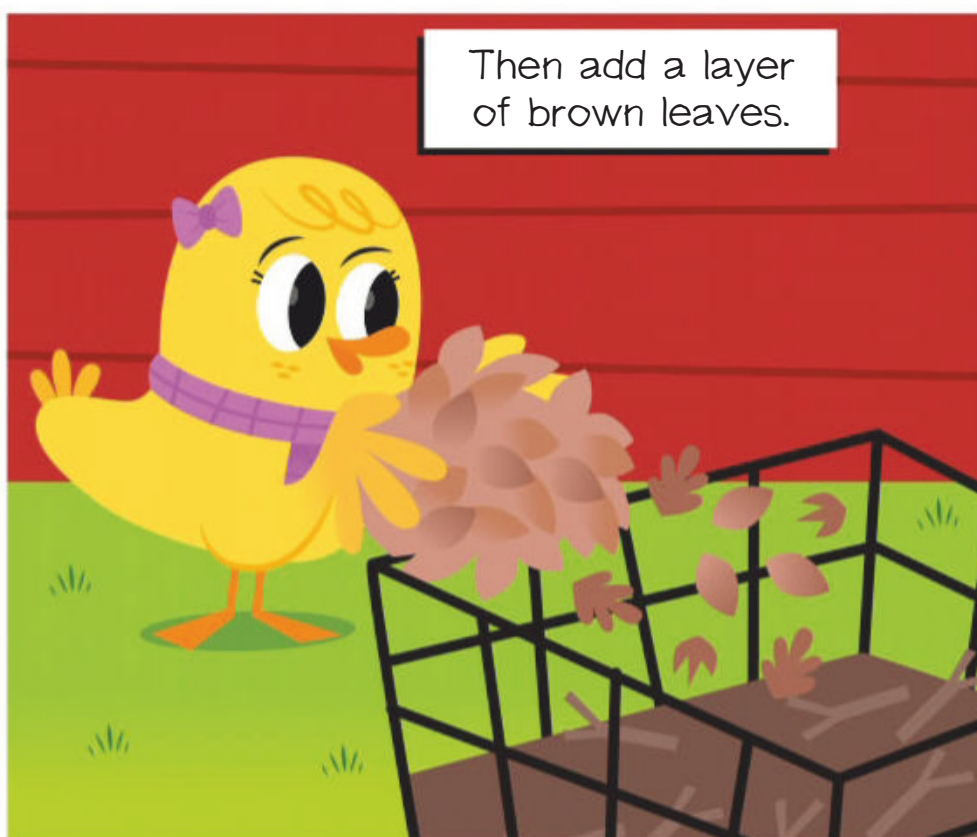


Compost piles are easy to get started.

You need a layer of sticks at the bottom.



Then add a layer of brown leaves.



Next comes a layer of grass clippings and some dirt, and then more layers of leaves and grass and vegetable scraps.



I'll water the pile just until it's damp.



Why did we add dirt?



It's full of tiny bugs that help break everything down. Once they've made a start, larger critters like earthworms and millipedes show up. They break everything down even more.



Can I throw my apple core in?

Yes, just about any kind of old plant can go in.



Adding all those layers made me feel like a chef making lasagna.





A CLEAN

What keeps streets clean of leaves, dust, and dirt? And gets rid of nails or rocks that might cause flat tires? Street sweepers!

Hoses suck up leaves, dirt, and rocks into the holding bin.



Some street sweepers spray water to wash away dust and dirt.



Sweep

The holding bin is emptied into a landfill. When the street sweeper cleans up leaves, the leaves can become compost.



Sometimes hoses push air out. The strong blast of air blows dirt off the street but doesn't suck it up.



Spinning brushes near the front tires scrub the street clean. On some sweepers, everything brushed under the truck is sucked up by the hoses.

Street sweepers come in all sizes! Smaller ones are great for cleaning narrow side streets.



A Visit to the Recycling Center

by Tracy Vonder Brink

photos by Tom Uhlman

You've finished the last glass of milk. The plastic milk jug is empty. After a quick rinse, you put it in your recycling bin. Where does it go? If you live in Ohio, Kentucky, Indiana, or West Virginia, your milk jug might go to a Rumpke recycling center.



1 Rumpke's drivers empty recycling bins into trucks nearly every day. Your milk jug is on its way!

2 At the recycling center, the truck dumps everything onto an area called the tipping floor. Do you see your milk jug?



3 Front loaders scoop up the recyclables from the floor. They pour everything into machines that empty onto two conveyor belts.

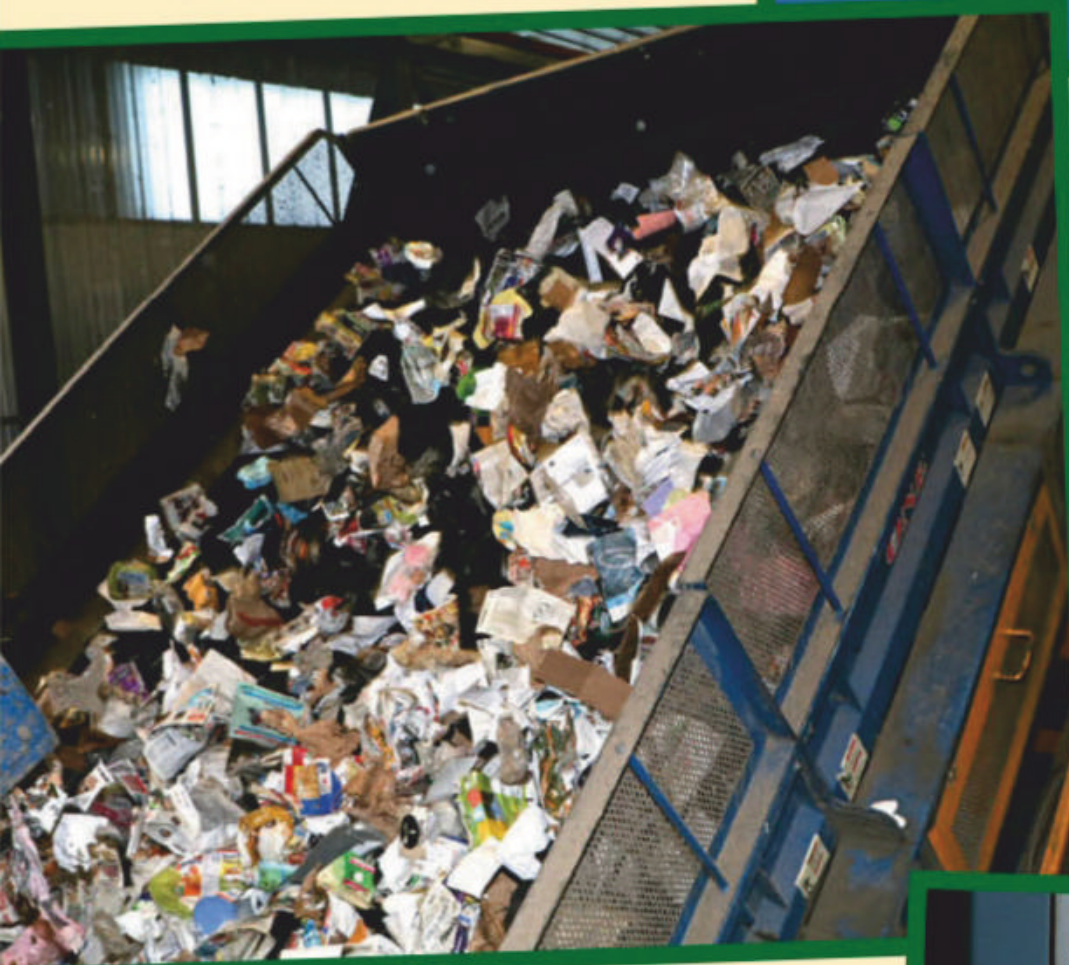
4 There's your milk jug! It's traveling on a conveyor belt. Workers watch everything that goes by on the belt. They pull out and throw away anything that can't be recycled.



5 The conveyor belt dumps your milk jug into a cardboard sorter. But the jug is not cardboard, so it travels on.



6 Next, the recyclables go through a machine that bounces them up and down. Heavy glass falls to the bottom and gets sorted. Lightweight plastic water bottles bounce out and land in another area. But not your milk jug.



7 Your milk jug travels underneath a machine with a computer inside. The computer looks for paper. When it finds some, a puff of air blows the paper one way. Your milk jug keeps going another way.





8 The remaining recyclables travel up and under a magnet. The magnet pulls out cans. Can you spot your milk jug?

9 Finally, your milk jug goes through a machine with a computer set to find its kind of plastic. Puff! The machine separates your milk jug and other jugs from the rest of the recyclables.



10 The jugs land in a big bin called a bunker. Each kind of recyclable has its own bunker. When the bunker is full, everything inside is squished together to form a bale. Your milk jug is in there somewhere!

11 The finished bales are stacked. Some are made of cans or paper. Others are all plastic. Can you find where your milk jug might be?



12 The bales are sold to companies to make something new. This bench is made from recycled plastic. You could be sitting on your milk jug when you picnic in the park!

What a great tour.



WASHED ASHORE

Every year millions of tons of plastic end up in our oceans, waterways, and shorelines. It's ugly, and worse, plastic trash can hurt animals who try to eat it or get tangled up in it.



Volunteers for the Washed Ashore project work to clean local beaches. They pick up the plastic, clean it, and sort it by color and size.

Then they help artists use the trash to build giant sculptures of sea animals. The statues are meant to show people how much junk litters our oceans.



Plastic comes in all sorts of colors. It never needs to be dyed for any of the statues, even this colorful parrotfish.

Uh-oh. Did we forget our pails and shovels on the beach?

A lot of people must have.



This sculpture of a humpback whale tail splashing in the ocean is about 10 feet tall. Imagine how much trash it took to make. All the pieces are attached with metal or glue, never more plastic.

I see a flip-flop in the middle of the whale tail.





Just like a real weedy sea dragon, this beautiful plastic version swims through seaweed. But this seaweed is made from green plastic bottles, and the spots on the sea dragon's snout are bottle caps.

The flippers on this hawksbill sea turtle are covered with cut-up pieces of flip-flops. Its nose was once a yellow toy boat. The sea jelly behind it is made from plastic bags and a water bottle.

The Washed Ashore volunteers pick up more water bottles than any other trash.



Trash or Toys?

Americans throw away enough trash to fill 63,000 garbage trucks every single day. Most of the trash was used only once.



Making all that stuff costs money and energy and materials. So does getting rid of it.

Reusing things—even just one more time—cuts those costs. It lowers the amount of waste and pollution in the world too. Experts say it's even better than recycling.

And it can be fun, especially if you reuse your trash to make toys.

We can make
some cool stuff!



Can or Piggy Bank?

Ask a grownup to cut a slot in the plastic lid of a clean, empty can. Decorate the can with scrap paper or fabric and paints or markers to make a piggy bank.



Milk Jug or Toss-and-Catch Game?

Ask a grownup to cut off the bottom of a clean, empty milk jug. Tie one end of a piece of yarn around a pom-pom ball. Tie the other end around the milk jug handle. Now toss. Can you catch the ball in the jug?



You can decorate the jug, or cover the cut edge with colored tape or paper.

Cereal Box or Magazine Holder?

Cut off the top and trim the sides of an empty cereal box. Decorate the box, and you have the perfect place to store your issues of *Click*.



Now I'll always know where to find my *Click* magazines!



Egg Carton and Paper Tube or Toy Train?

Cut up an egg carton to make passenger cars for a toy train. Use a toilet paper tube for the engine. Decorate the cars, punch holes in the ends, and tie everything together with yarn or string. Choo-choo!



Egg Carton or Toy Helicopter?

Cut out and decorate one cup from an egg carton, one tip of a carton divider, and one entire divider.



Glue two strips of stiff paper together to make a cross shape, then punch a hole in the center of the cross for the helicopter blades.

Poke a slit in the bottom of the egg cup. Use a brass paper fastener to attach the blades and the carton tip to the cup. Glue on the divider for the tail. Ta-da! A helicopter with blades that spin!



May I have a turn spinning the blades?



Where Does It Go?

art by Susan Todd

Do you know where this trash should go? Follow the paths to see.



Don't flush used tissues down the toilet.



Shredded newspaper and cardboard can be composted. But there's a better place for large pieces.



You don't need to scrub empty cans clean, but rinsing them helps.



Worms, bugs, and other tiny creatures will happily finish the bits of fruit you don't eat.



Some towns ask you to take caps off your bottles. Others let you leave them on.



Paper, plastic, glass, and cans go in the recycling bin. They'll be collected and made into new paper, plastic, glass, and cans.

The average American tosses out nearly five pounds of trash a day. Some gets recycled, but most gets buried in landfills. Without proper care, landfills can pollute nearby water, land, and air.

Leaves, grass, and fruit and vegetable scraps rot in a compost pile and turn into—compost! Compost looks like dark, crumbly dirt. Spread it in your garden to help plants grow.

Answer on page 34.

Nature's Recyclers

Have you ever helped rake up a yard? Just a few trees can drop huge piles of leaves that fill many, many bags and bins.

Imagine how many leaves fall in a forest. Who cleans up all those leaves?

Nature's recyclers collect waste and dead things that would otherwise litter the earth. They reuse the stuff or break it down into tiny bits that other living things need.

Wow. I could use those worms in my garden.



Turkey vultures easily eat food that would make other animals sick. By eating rotting meat, they help keep diseases from spreading.

Why don't the vultures get sick? Special strong acids in their stomachs kill the bad parts. The vulture's bald head helps protect it too. Messy food and germs would get stuck in feathers, but a bald head is easy to keep clean.



Earthworms don't have teeth, but some kinds can eat their weight in dead leaves every day. The leaves go through the worm's body and come out as fertilizer. Everywhere you find good soil, you'll find earthworms.

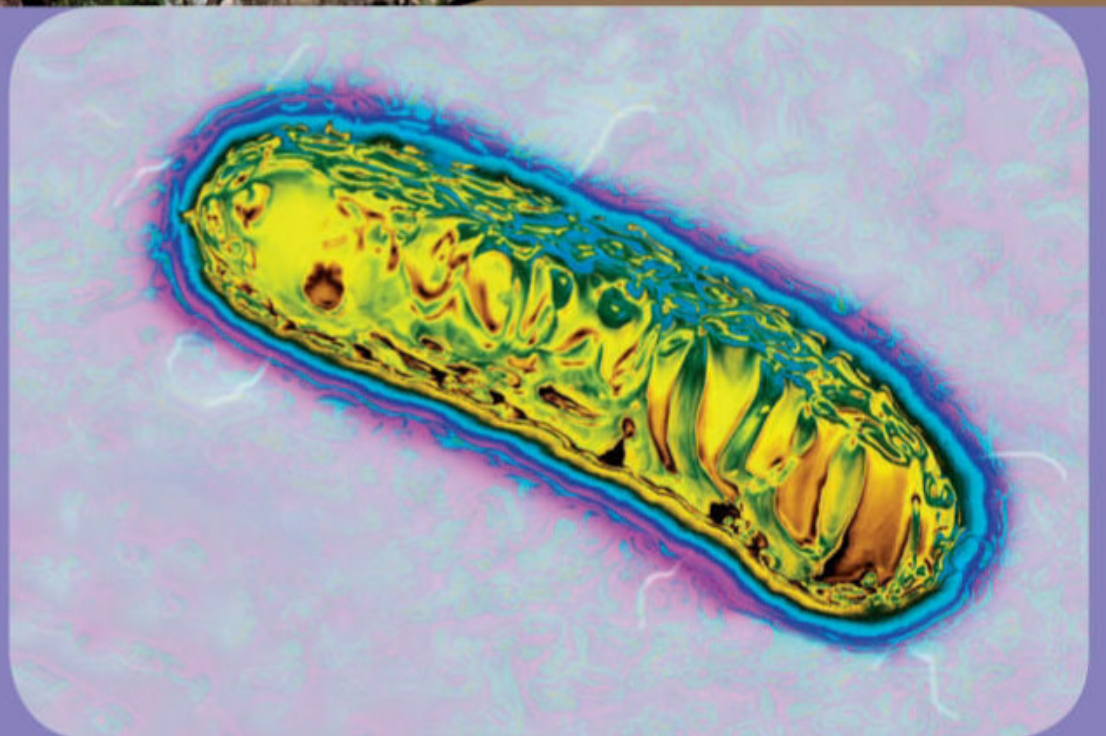


Dung is another name for poop, and that's just what dung beetles eat! Some farmers depend on dung beetles to keep the pastures where their cattle graze—and poop—clean.



Mushrooms are fungi. They can't make their own food the way plants do. Instead, they break down tree stumps and other dead wood to soak up the plants' nutrients. They use some of the nutrients themselves and return the rest to the soil.

You can't see teeny **bacteria** without a microscope, but they're everywhere—even living inside you! Some bacteria cause diseases, but others break down food and other once-living things into tiny bits that plants and animals can use.



ONE Plastic Bag

A stylized illustration of a woman with dark skin, looking slightly to the right. She is wearing a vibrant headwrap with a purple, pink, and black geometric pattern. Her dress also features a similar bold pattern in shades of pink, purple, and black. A yellow circular earring is visible on her left ear. The background is a soft, light pink with faint, stylized raindrops.

based on the true story of
Isatou Ceesay and the recycling
women of Njau, Gambia

by Miranda Paul
art by Elizabeth Zunon

Isatou walks with her
chin frozen. Fat raindrops
pelt her bare arms. She
steadies the palm-leaf basket
carefully balanced on her head.

Warm scents of burning wood
and bubbling peanut stew drift
past. Her village is close now. She
lifts her nose to catch the smell.

The basket tips. One fruit
tumbles. Then two. Then
ten. The basket
breaks. Isatou
kicks the dirt.



Something silky dances past her eyes. It flaps in the wind and settles under a tamarind tree. Isatou slides the strange fabric through her fingers and discovers it can carry things inside. She gathers her fruits in the bag.

The basket is useless now. She drops it, knowing it will crumble and mix back in with the dirt.

Isatou walks on. Four goats greet her outside Grandmother Mbombbeh's house. "Hurry in before the rain soaks you!" Grandmother says.



Isatou scurries in, and Grandmother serves spicy rice and fish. Rain drums on the roof.

"I broke your basket," Isatou confesses. "But I found this."

"Plastic," Grandmother frowns. "There's more in the city."

Day after day, Isatou watches neighbors tote their things in bright blue or black plastic bags. Children slurp water and juice from tiny holes poked in clear bags. Market trays fill with candies wrapped in rainbows of plastic.

The colors are beautiful, she thinks. She swings her bag high. The handle breaks. One paper escapes. Then two. Then ten.

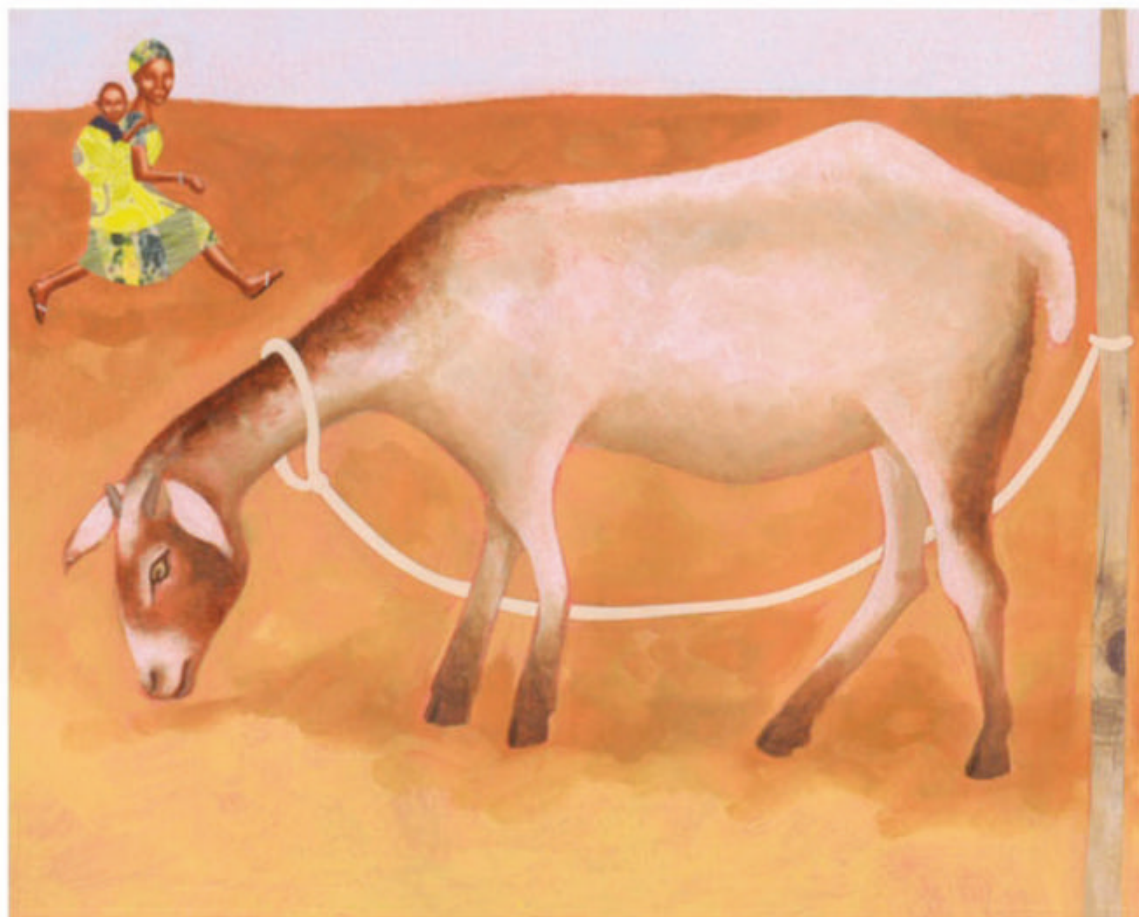


Isatou shakes sand off her papers. Another plastic bag floats by, and she tucks her things inside. The torn bag is useless now. She drops it to the dirt, as everyone does. There's nowhere else to put it.

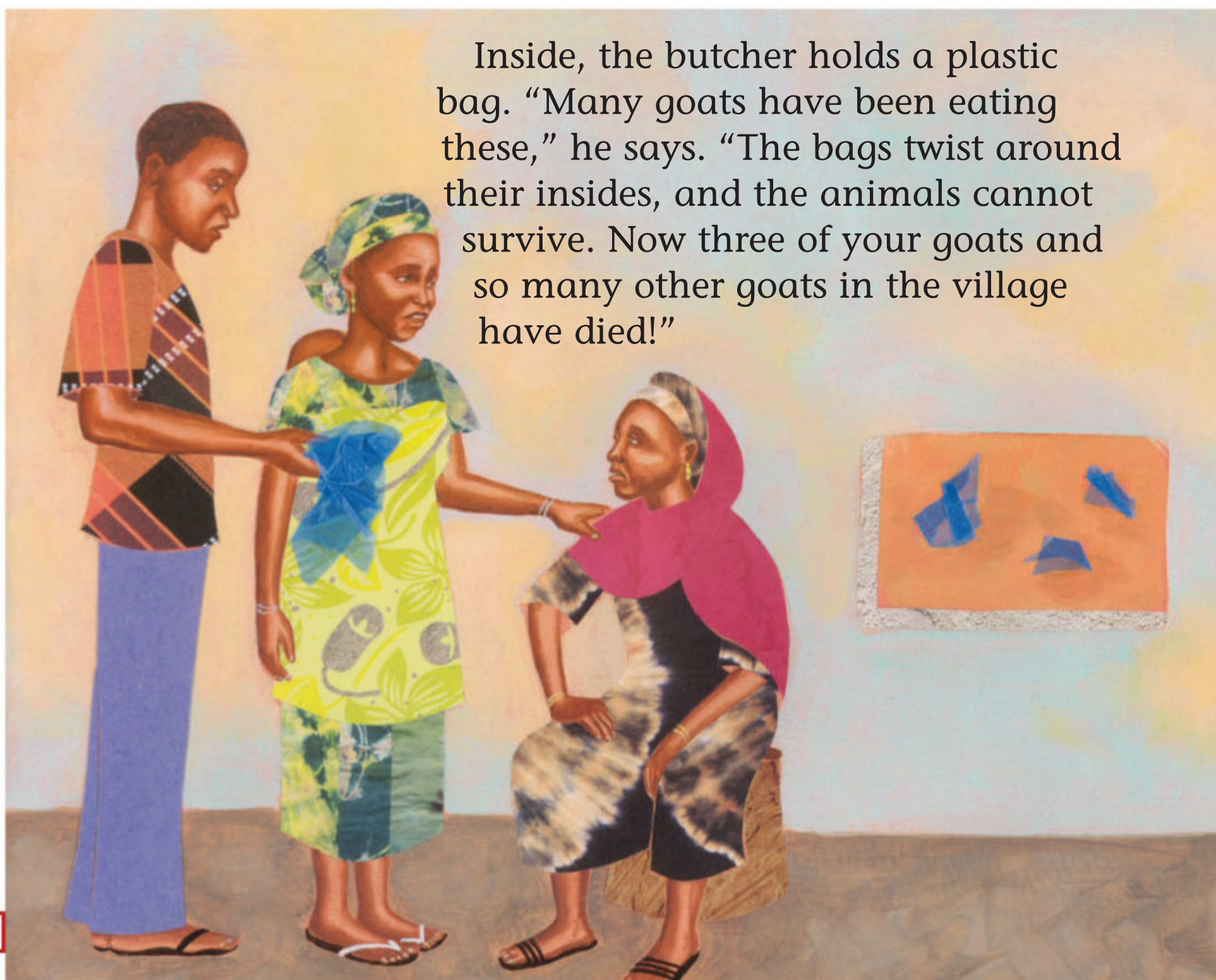
Day after day, the bag she dropped is still there. One plastic bag becomes two. Then ten. Then a hundred. Plastic isn't beautiful anymore, she thinks.

Years pass and Isatou grows into a woman. She barely notices the ugliness growing around her . . . until the ugliness finds its way to her.

Isatou hears a goat crying and hurries toward Grandmother's house. Why is it tied up? Where are the other goats?



Inside, the butcher holds a plastic bag. "Many goats have been eating these," he says. "The bags twist around their insides, and the animals cannot survive. Now three of your goats and so many other goats in the village have died!"



Grandmother Mbombeh's powerful shoulders sag. Isatou must be strong and do something. But what?

Isatou's feet lead her to the old, ugly road. A pile of garbage stands as wide as Grandmother's cooking hut. Mosquitoes swarm near dirty pools of water alongside the pile. Smoke from burning plastic stings her nose. Her feet back away.



Goats scamper past. They search through the trash for food. Her feet stop. She knows too much to ignore it now.

Holding her breath, she plucks one plastic bag from the pile. Then two. Then ten. Then a hundred.



“What can we do?” Isatou asks her friends.

“Let’s wash them,” says Fatim. Maram grabs a bucket, and Incha fetches water from the well. Peggy finds clothespins, and they clip the washed bags on the line.

As the bags dry, Isatou watches her sister crochet. “Can you teach me?” Her sister hands Isatou a metal tool and shows her the stitches.

Later, Isatou finds a broomstick and carves her own tool from its wood. “What’s that for?” Fatim asks.

Isatou pauses. She and Peggy have an idea. But will their friends think it’s crazy? Nervously, she explains the plan.



One friend agrees to help. Then two. Then five!

The women cut bags into strips and roll them into spools of plastic thread. They teach themselves how to crochet with this thread. Some people in the village laugh at them. But Isatou and her friends believe what they are doing is good.





They crochet by candlelight, away from those who mock them . . .

until a morning comes when they will no longer work in secret.

Fingers sore and blistered, Isatou hauls the recycled purses to the city. One person laughs at her. Then two. Then ten. Then . . .

One woman lays money on the table. She chooses a purse and shows it to one friend. Then two. Then ten. Soon everyone wants one!



Isatou fills her own purse with money. She zips it shut and rides home to tell Grandmother she has made enough to buy a new goat.

When she passes by the pile of rubbish, she smiles because it is smaller now. She tells herself, one day it will be gone and my home will be beautiful.

And one day . . . it was.

Tough Stuff

by Emily Cambias

Reusing old tires keeps them out of the dump. Tires are strong and sturdy, perfect for making things that have to stay outdoors all year long.

These tires were made into playground toys, chairs, and a planter.

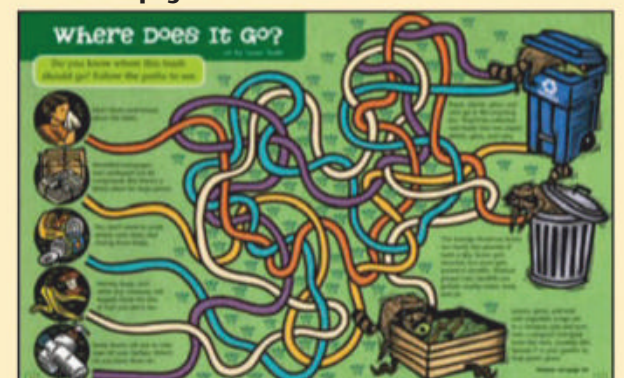
How many reused tires can you see?



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Answer to page 22–23.



Have you ever
Had to
Cool your heels
While a
Bunch of seals
Had their skins oiled?



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Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

Carefully remove the takeout pages. Each player needs a marker to use on the game board. Buttons or dried beans work well, as long as each player has a different color, so it's easy to tell the markers apart. Players will also need a die to throw and about 20 small pieces of trash, such as bottle caps, packing peanuts, or crumpled scraps of old paper.

Each player puts a marker on the HOME space and takes one piece of trash. Place the rest of the trash on Earth in the middle of the game board.

The first player rolls the die, moves his or her marker the number of squares the die shows, and adds or removes a piece of trash from Earth as directed. Then it is the next player's turn.

Keep taking turns until all the trash is removed from Earth. The player who cleaned up the most trash wins.



C'mon,
let's play.

Home



You walk to the park instead of driving.
Remove a piece of trash.



You put on a sweater instead of turning up the heat.
Remove a piece of trash.

You throw a plastic water bottle into the trash.
Add a piece of trash.

You make a magazine holder from your empty cereal box.
Remove a piece of trash.



You buy a card made of recycled paper.
Remove a piece of trash.



You put the newspaper in the recycling bin.
Remove a piece of trash.



You forget your pail and shovel at the beach.
Add a piece of trash.

You add your apple core to the compost pile.
Remove a piece of trash.

Reduce

Reuse



